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compliment to our progressive capabilities than the most favorable view of the facts will justify. By far the greater number of our present designers have never received any teaching whatever in these schools. The great number of the students consists of those who are learning the business, and who have not yet gained the position of actual designers. When the transition from this apprenticeship stage has been passed, and a class of English designers arises who have received their education in these schools, then it will be soon enough to seek for the fruits, and to criticise the principle of our present attempts for the improvement of Art. That we may be allowed to be very sanguine with respect to the consequences, is admissible; but that we should already seek for them, nay, even profess to find them, only proves our inexperience of the slowly operating character of all great and real educational advancement. For any improvement that may have manifested itself of late in industrial design, we are indebted, not to our own schools, but to the increased union of English capital and Parisian taste, to the introduction into this country of French workmen, whose superior productions have stirred up a spirit of emulation amongst English designers, as complimentary to the former as it has been beneficial to the latter." This explanation and admission seems to us just and reasonable; and not only applicable to the remarks on which it is based, but also to popular Art criticism in general. In these matters we have not yet learned the virtues of patience.

Correspondence.

ART AND THE DRAMA.

PARIS, Jan. 4, 1855.

LIFE is truly made up of melancholy contrasts. Everybody that moves in the world of Paris, interested in the Arts and in Literature—the *attachés* of the press both great or small—beautiful actresses on the mimic stage, as well as in the world of fashion—in a word, all of the charming class which rules by the force of wit and beauty, were assembled the other evening at the *Théâtre Français* to witness the first performance of a comedy by one of the best actors of the company, M. Samson. The house, beaming with splendor and smiles, fairly rung with its oft-repeated applause. One lovely woman, however, was missing at the entertainment given at her own house, and more than one among the audience, forgetting the performance on the stage, would turn with serious face and saddened eye, to gaze upon her empty box.

On the morning of the next day, the Church of the Madeleine, draped in black, stood open to receive the attendants upon a funeral ceremony. All the artists, all the writers, and many of the bewitching actresses, seen the evening before upon the stage, were grouped around the bier of Madame Arsène Houssaye, the admired and lamented wife of the young director of the *Théâtre Français*. Madame Arsène Houssaye, taken away at the age of twenty-eight, after a tedious and painful affection of the heart, was related, by her mother, to the world of Art. Daughter of Madame Edmée Brucy, whom Prud'hon had counted among his pupils, she had been reared by a taste most *spirituelle*, and her nature, already ethereal, had become still more refined by education. She understood remarkably well the beautiful language of the poets. How many times have we watched her in that box, where she will be seen

no more, radiant with youthful charms, and decked with violets, or the pure white rose, applauding with her pretty hands, the actresses and friends whom she loved! She was kind to all who wielded the pen or the pencil, and she was conscious of being almost their equal. Who among us all has not gazed upon her in the saloons of the *Rue du Bac*, or at her hotel in the *Avenue Chateaubriand*, enthroned like a queen in the midst of a circle, where mingled together Mlle. Rachel and Eugène Delacroix, Augustine Brohan and Alexandre Dumas, Madame Victor Hugo, and the illustrious poet whose name she bears,—Clévinger, Théophile Gautier, Vidal, finally the entire class of attentive artists and men of letters?

But let us return to M. Samson's little drama. Like Molière and like Shakspeare, but infinitely less great than these glorious masters, M. Samson, who is one of the most capable artists of the French comedy, adds to this excellence the talent of a writer. *La Belle Mère*, *Le Gendre*, and *La Famille Poison*, represented formerly, were quite successful: so, also, with the new piece of *La Dot de ma Fille*. Nothing more simple than this little comedy, which seems to have been composed expressly for performance between two screens in the space of a provincial parlor! It is the story of a German *savant*. He has no other fortune than his library, and is obliged to part with it, in order to give his daughter a dowry. It is certainly not a very dramatic subject, but M. Samson has treated the characters skillfully, and has shown, in the management of details, a perception which no one gave him credit for. Unfortunately the piece is written in verse lacking both variety and vigor, and the style is decidedly feeble. That which is most remarkable in this little family-comedy, is the representation of it. M. Samson reserved for himself the part of the bookworm; generally of a sarcastic spirit, and full of irony, he gave this character with much feeling, even approaching pathos. Thus has this actor-author been doubly successful.

If ever Art and Literature should desert the *Théâtre Français*, we now know where to seek them. The *Gymnase*, so long content with wearisome vaudevilles, has secured the aid of well-known authors, and through them it has become an attractive place. It may be styled the *Théâtre Français* in miniature. George Sand, Emile Augier, Alexandre Dumas, the younger, have furnished for this stage excellent and life-like comedies, as well as touching dramas. The *Gymnase* has lately made a new acquisition, which may be considered a truly great literary conquest. Madame de Girardin, descending from the regions where her muse commonly dwells, has written for it a little piece, called *The Watchmaker's Hat*, and it will prove to be one of the great successes of the winter. Madame de Girardin has had the courage to give us a true vaudeville, full of gaiety and explosive with laughter. Amedée, a zealous but awkward servant, while arranging his master's apartment, has the misfortune to break his clock in pieces; in order to conceal the accident, the poor fellow contrives a thousand ingenious tricks, and finally, at his wit's end, sends for a clockmaker, who carries off the remains, but, in his haste, forgets and leaves his hat

upon the table. When the master of the house returns, he observes the hat, and at once entertains jealous sentiments, for he supposes that his wife has a lover: everything is explained, however, by the return of the watchmaker, who comes back to look for his forgotten hat. Upon this foundation, which is neither new nor complicated, Madame de Girardin has constructed a dialogue glowing with wit and animation; the situations are comic, and the incidents are well drawn out, and rapidly given. From the rising of the curtain to its fall, the house is convulsed with laughter, and the fit hangs on after one leaves the theatre behind him. Moreover, this charming little piece is extremely well performed by Bertoy and Dupais, and, above all, by Lessueur, the awkward servant who breaks the clock. *The Watchmaker's Hat* is, indeed, something more than a trifling production, but it has a value when one is reminded that it comes from the intelligent pen of her who gave us *La joie fait peur*. To combine thus tears with laughter is a cleverness rarely found among women.

Observe how soon difficult questions are solved. In my last letter, I wrote in relation to *Ernani*, that the audience of the *Italiens* were not yet familiar with Verdi, and that there might be some difficulty in France in the way of appreciating the true value of this master. Well, what was true last month is not so to-day: *Il Trovatore* has been played at the *Italiens*, and everything is changed. Paris, but lately timid, even hostile, is now enthusiastic. The *Trovatore* of Joseph Verdi was performed for the first time at Rome, at the *Apollo Theatre*, during the carnival of 1853, and it obtained a wonderful success. All Italy was alive with this bold work, and there are few scenes in this opera which were not welcomed with renewed applause. Paris was behindhand, but now that the representation has taken place, Verdi himself will admit that he has lost nothing by waiting patiently. He has finally obtained the verdict of connoisseurs who, if not the most intelligent, are, at least, the most difficult to please, and, above all, the most alive to every novelty in the way of Art and of Music.

It is not our disposition to analyze the poem upon which Verdi has strung his melodies. It is well known that the authors of opera *libretti* pay but little attention to probabilities, to sentiment, or to judgment. They seek first for musical situations without especially regarding the truth of the causes which produce them. This feeling has governed Salvatore Cammarano, the author of the *Trovatore*. Without troubling himself about the strict rules of dramatic Art, he has inlaid his poem with murders and abductions, duels and suicides, and his heroes are either raging or disconsolate desperadoes. What does it matter, you will say with some truth, if the composer has been able to avail himself of this absurd fable, and throw into it his own sentiment and melody? Joseph Verdi, whose inspiration is so dramatic, has rendered *Il Trovatore* one of the most remarkable operas of the day. Although he may not have abandoned his usual means: namely, the excess of sound—an overstrained, clamorous, and complicated scoring—melodious passages suddenly in-

errupted—Verdi seems still to have made decided progress; he is more sure of himself, and it seems that in his din of musical sound, he imbues it with more feeling and expression. The chorus of gypsies—quite original—various love scenes, besides airs full of breadth, completely carried away the house, and—a thing almost unknown in France—the author was called before the curtain three times. The audience of the *Théâtre Italien* has rarely witnessed a more brilliant success.

It is necessary to say that the execution of *Il Trovatore* was quite remarkable. Graziani and Gassier gave their parts with consummate skill. As to the tenor, Carlo Beaucardé, who made his *début* in the character of Manrico, which he made his own in Rome, he was slightly unwell upon the first representation, and it would not be proper to judge him by it; he is, however, a conscientious artist, and one who is a valuable acquisition to the *Théâtre Italien*. By the side of the singers that we have just named, Mesdames Frezzolini and Borghi-manio have done wonders, and they, the latter particularly, added to the great success of the evening. With a susceptible nature, and one easily moved, Madame Frezzolini throws her whole heart in her song. She has an admirable musical feeling. Madame Borghi-manio, whom I have already mentioned in connection with the part of Arsace, in *Semiramide*, is decidedly a most gifted contralto. She is an excellent artiste, and lessens the regrets which were felt on the departure of Alboni. She has a very important part in *Il Trovatore*, and she renders it with rare felicity, particularly the dramatic recitative, which the composer has allotted to her character. Thanks to these competent interpreters, who almost all of them belong to a new generation of singers, Verdi will be hereafter better represented at the *Théâtre Italien* than Rossini himself could have been in his time. Here we have, by-the-by, just written a very great name. What will he say—the enchanting author of *Il Barbiere* and of *La Semiramide*—what does he think at least of this music, which seems scarcely to be Italian, and which, nevertheless, modern Italy greets with such lively enthusiasm? With Rossini melody overflows without end; it seems as if it might be conscious of its joyous birth, and it goes swelling onward and onward so long as the human voice is capable of expressing it. It is not the same with Verdi; his phrase is short and abrupt; it bursts forth in thousands of brief and brilliant sparkles; it is true, and there are often admirable expressions of grief, joy, and anguish—the tormented spirit and the restless soul. The author of *Louisa Miller* and *Il Trovatore* concerns himself particularly with expression; when the music does not meet his want, he bursts out with a shriek. All the resources of the orchestra are available to him; he loves overwhelming noise—the most resounding symbols, drums and bells; he has resource to everything which vibrates to everything in the way of sound, which produces stunning effect upon the ear; if he does not employ cannon, it is because all the cannon of France have gone to pass the winter at Sebastopol. Let us admit, too, that in the hands of this skillful master, all those divine elements produce very fine effects.

In these lyrical usages, so opposed to Italian traditions, may not we seek to establish the evident influence of German Art, and could it not be said, reserving the degree of comparison, that Verdi is an Italian Meyerbeer.

Whilst the *Théâtre Ventadour* reverberates with his powerful harmonies, a neighboring establishment—the *Opéra Comique*—is filled with the favors of Flora and their accompaniment, applause. A charming artist, who has been absent for two years from the opera, Madame Ugalde, has been cordially welcomed back to its boards. She re-appeared in the part of *Galathée*, and certainly she could not have chosen a better one. Received on her re-appearance with oft-repeated *bravas*, she had scarcely uttered a note before it was evident that her voice had lost none of its richness and power, and more than this, it was apparent that Madame Ugalde had been studying in her retreat. She returns more sure of herself, and substitutes a method, which experience has perfected, for the former inspiration and less considered boldness of her early career. On this brilliant occasion, and those which followed it, Madame Ugalde sung and played her part of the *Living Statue* with wonderful effect, with a charmingly truthful spirit. She is very much at home in comedy, it is very apparent, and we are not less pleased than she is. There are, in the second act of *Galathée*, particularly, some stanzas which she sings charmingly. Animated by the prayer of the sculptor, Pygmalion, she comes down from her pedestal, and free from the cold embrace of the marble, she feels the movement of life and all its charms with the curiosity of an infant. Thus, for the first time, at the table of a rich banqueter, she moistens her virgin lips with an unknown wine, and soon experiencing the effect of the warming draught, she becomes slightly exhilarated; then, her head covered with myrtle and ivy—with joy on her lips and in her eyes, she rises, holding the brimming cup in her hand, and sings. The stanzas she then gives with so much grace, act upon the public with an irresistible charm, and every evening they have to be repeated. It is impossible to put into song more expression, more vivacity, and more of an attractive loveliness. The day of Madame Ugalde's re-appearance, bouquets were thrown in profusion, and she was twice called out. The public will not miss the way to the opera when this delightful cantatrice sings.

I close my letter by some bits of news. According to my presentiment, Madame Stoltz was neither contented with the public nor with herself. She leaves the Opera, and in order to recover her lost liberty, she consents to pay a forfeit of 50,000 francs. Last week, a young Spaniard, of the name of Fortuni, made her *début* in *Lucia di Lammermoor*. She was tolerably well received, although it is evident she needs to study both her music and her utterance: lastly, the *Opéra* is preparing a ballet by Messrs. Th. Labarre and Mazilbier, for the charming dancer Rosati.

At the *Théâtre Français*, *La Czarine*, by M. Scribe, is being rehearsed; the principal part is to be performed by Rachel. On the other hand, the *Théâtre des Italiens*, encouraged by its late success, has put in preparation an important work, by the

Maestro Pacini, the rival of Verdi among the *dilettanti* beyond the mountains. Pacini has just arrived in Paris, to hasten the representation of his opera. At the *Gymnase* there is no less activity. Alexander Dumas, the younger, will soon give the *Demi-Monde*, a comedy full of wit and observation; it will, no doubt, meet with success equal to that of *Diane de Lys*.

In the Arts, everything is quiet. Sculptors and painters are tranquilly engaged in their silent studios upon works destined for the great Exhibition. Some day, if you desire to go with us, we will half open the door to these industrious walls, and we will enter and admire beforehand the statues and pictures, which the public are not to enjoy until the month of May.

MANTZ.

THE taste for collecting works of Art in England, originated with the court. Henry VIII. was the first who formed a collection of pictures. It was, however, of moderate extent, since, including miniatures, it contained no more than one hundred and fifty works. The glory of first forming a gallery of paintings on a large scale, belongs to Charles I.; he succeeded in forming a collection of paintings, which was not only the richest of that age, in masterpieces of the time of Raphael, but is scarcely, perhaps, to be equalled in our days. The chief portion consisted of the collection of the Dukes of Mantua, purchased through the Duke of Buckingham, for which he is said to have paid £80,000—a very large sum in those days. That collection was, however, one of the first in Italy; the family of Guizaga, at Mantua, having been one hundred and fifty years in forming it; and this family was second only in patronage of the Arts to that of Medici. In this collection were the celebrated triumphal procession of Julius Caesar, Andrea Mantegna, and by Giulio Romano, a number of capital easel-pictures. Raphael, probably, painted for the Gonzagas the famous Holy Family, known in the Escorial by the name of the *Pearl*; Correggio painted his Education of Cupid (now in the English National Gallery), and two allegorical pictures. Titian, his celebrated Entombment (now in the Louvre) and the twelve first Cæsars. All these, and admirable works by other masters, were purchased for England. The king obtained, through the intervention of Rubens, the seven celebrated Cartoons by Raphael. Lastly, foreign sovereigns and his own subjects vied with each other in adding to the collection, by most valuable presents.

The political events, however, which led to death of Charles I., and the protectorship of Cromwell, put an end, for a considerable time, to encouragement of the Fine Arts. In July, 1650, it was resolved by parliament to sell by public auction, all the pictures and statues, valued at £49,903 2s. 6d. The sale took place, and attracted vast numbers of agents from foreign princes, and amateurs from all parts of Europe. The sum paid for the whole, was £118,080 10s. 2d. The celebrated seven Cartoons, by Raphael, were purchased by Cromwell's order, for the nation, for £300. The Spanish Ambassador purchased so many paintings, and other valuable articles, that eighteen mules were required to convey them from Corunna to Madrid. Among these pictures was the large Holy Family, by Raphael, from the Mantua collection. Philip IV. is said to have exclaimed on seeing it, "That is my pearl!" hence the name by which this picture has since been known to the lovers of the Arts.

Dr. Waagen.